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Emergent Strategy in Applied Theatre with Youth: Traversing Fear and Creating Justice

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Emergent Strategy in Applied Theatre with Youth: Traversing Fear and Creating Justice

by

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Dedication

To Confidence, Ciana, Asena, Cookie, Timya, Av, Lovely, & North baby, thank you! Your joy, laughter, creativity and art made this PJP experience nothing short of wonderful.

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Abstract

Emergent Strategy in Applied Theatre with Youth: Traversing Fear and Creating Justice

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Having conversations about gender and racial justice and actively engaging in performance-based change work can be complex and difficult. As a facilitator of performance work focused on social justice, I am tasked with constantly learning about and reflecting on my own complicated relationships to race, gender, injustice and its many manifestations. While I have the privilege to work with young people as they journey through their own process of discovery and exploration, the process of simultaneously guiding others and the self to explore gender and racial justice through theatre, creates experiences of fear, uncertainty, and deep questioning in my work. Therefore, with this study, I explore how adrienne maree brown's theories on sustainable activism and social justice practices offer pathways towards acknowledging, questioning and moving through moments of fear in applied theatre.

Borrowing from adrienne maree brown's writing on sustainable activism in *Emergent Strategy,* I look at two of her core concepts in relation to my own work with young people in the Performing Justice Project:

1. valuing small scale growth and change (fractals)
2. honoring nonlinear growth and transformation,

I apply and then analyze how a focus on small scale growth and change and nonlinear growth and transformation shape my own ability to address moments of fear and move toward gender and racial justice with young participants. Using reflective practitioner research, this MFA thesis examines how the artist-facilitator might acknowledge and recognize moments where fear arises to use emergent strategies in performance-based work to engage the body in moving past fear in order to envision and perform justice.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter One: Applied Theatre and Emergent Strategy

"There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns."

-Octavia E. Butler

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2019, Laura Epperson—my collaborating partner—and I piloted our first Performing Justice Project (PJP). On day three of our three-week residency, we were defining race and ethnicity with a group of participants and encountered our first real moment of disagreement and tension amongst the participants. One of the young people in our ensemble referenced the book "*The Hate You Give,*" describing how the protagonist was fearful of being labeled as ghetto at school since she, a young black woman, attended an all-white school. In our group, someone grumbled angry comments about the use of the word ghetto coming from another person in the ensemble. A back and forth ensued where one person voiced their frustration while another defended themselves. At the time, our ensemble was made up of majority white and Latinx teens and this heated discussion took place between two of our white ensemble members. I remember feeling curious as to why one of our ensemble members got so offended. I didn't perceive the comments about the book character as being derogatory but merely providing an example of the subject at hand. I was also keenly aware of the social dynamic happening in the space; it was clear that the young person who was upset by the use of the term ghetto had more social capital with the other teens who were not a part of the verbal conflict. It quickly became an "us against one-person situation." Earlier that same day, the young person who was offended shared that people often made fun of them for "trying to act black" and that they were offended by these comments because they felt like they were just being themselves. After listening for a minute, I deduced that the frustrated teen had taken the

use of ghetto as a personal attack because of their perceived relationship and proximity to blackness and derogatory associations between race and class wrapped up in the term.

As the facilitator in that moment, my first instinct was to find a way to quickly resolve this situation. I was startled by the fact that so early in our process participants were already having a pretty major disagreement. While I was unsure how to address the issue or address where the issue came from, I made the decision to not move forward into our next activity in order to unpack the term "ghetto" and provide historical context to hopefully ease us through the moment. It didn't really work. The two ensemble members never truly reconciled after that situation. The young person who brought up the "ghetto example" shut down from that moment forward and eventually chose not to return to the project.

This moment is one example of how fear showed up in my work as a facilitator in a theatre program addressing gender and racial justice. Reflecting back on that moment, I realize now that my own fear of failing was the powerful undercurrent that guided my thoughts and actions. I wanted this pilot to be "successful," so I viewed the disagreement—and, later, the way I moved through the disagreement—as a hinderance to the success of the project. Many of us who consider ourselves adults still feel vulnerable or anxious when discussing issues surrounding race and gender. In my experience, there is often a fear of being wrong, judged, or unsafe in spaces that ask us to question or reflect on our beliefs, ideas, and identities. These same apprehensions are often felt by the young people we work with in applied theatre settings. In that moment of disagreement between the participants, I was challenged first with not knowing how to sit with my own discomfort. As a Black woman, I have my own complicated relationship with the term ghetto when used as an adjective. I've been called and referred to as ghetto by white people. I've used the term. I've also heard other people use it in a way that I personally found offensive. Conversations

surrounding who can use and reclaim what words are racially charged and based in complex histories. I felt a growing sense of anxiousness in my stomach, as I felt pressure to have a clear and concrete answer for the participants about who can and who shouldn't use that word as a descriptor for places, for themselves or for others. Truth was in that moment and still is, I still had questions myself. I have a personal opinion on the term and its use that is rooted in my experiences as a black woman. However, I felt hesitant to share that with the group. I didn't want my opinion to be centered and cause any further tension. Secondly, I wasn't sure how to show up for both participants. How do I validate their feelings, challenge them to listen, and offer a way for them to think about this issue from a different angle while tensions are high? How do I support myself, and my identity as a black woman in the space while supporting the youth in this moment of disagreement?

This early experience with the Performing Justice Project made me question how as an artist-facilitator, do I find the time, energy, and tactics needed to move through my own fears, or moments of unknowing, to engage and keep others engaged in a process that requires both courage and vulnerability? Acknowledging that we're all in different places when it comes to our lived experiences and our process of building critical consciousness—no matter our age—is an important part of the Performing Justice Project. Since we are all entering the conversation from varying standpoints, conflict is bound to arise no matter how well intentioned our community agreements and participants are. This moment led me to question how might I utilize strategies from sustainable and loving activist practices to envision and perform justice with young people? This line of inquiry led me to study: how might the artist-facilitator acknowledge and recognize moments where fear arises and use Emergent Strategy in performance-based work to engage the body in moving past fear in order to envision and perform justice?

adrienne maree brown sites the potential for creating new possibilities and realities as one of her favorite aspects of emergent strategy (155). brown goes on to say that, "At the human scale, in order to create a world that works for more people, for more life, we have to collaborate on the process of dreaming and visioning and implementing that world. We have to recognize that a multitude of realities have, do and will exist" (158). Each time we push past our fears and doubts to dream together we broaden our horizons. We push that line, where the earth's surface and the sky meets further and further back, creating new realities, new possibilities and new chances for Justice. It is my hope that through theorizing my own experiences of navigating the web of challenges and joys that is justice-centered applied theatre work, I help myself and others take steps toward creating a world that works for us all. A world where we are all able to thrive and have the tools, resources and support necessary to create justice for ourselves and our communities.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

> "When feminism does not explicitly oppose racism, and when antiracism does not incorporate opposition to patriarchy, race and gender politics often end up being antagonistic to each other and both interests lose."
>
> -Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw

As a Black woman, who has experienced both racism and sexism and overlooked inclusive gender politics in favor of a patriarchal race politic, I understand the antagonistic nature that Crenshaw speaks to. In my own journey, I had to begin decolonizing my own ideas surrounding gender, prescribed gender roles and positions within the exclusionary race politic that I'd adopted. This process began with self-reflection and learning to embrace my own unique version of Black womanhood which then extended into a desire

to embrace and incorporate inclusive race and gender politics into my work, life, and practice. In "Using Their Words: Six Elements of Social Justice Curriculum Design for the Elementary Classroom" author Bree Picower lists several elements that she believes are essential to the process of engaging young people in topics of social justice: Love and Knowledge, Respect for Others, Issues of Social Injustice, Movements and Social Change, Awareness Raising and lastly, Social Action (4). Picower argues that these elements provide a framework for elementary teachers to use as they develop and implement critically engaged lessons for their students. While Picower notes that these elements are not mutually exclusive, she does speak to the dangers of skipping over the beginning elements in favor of starting with issues of social injustice or any of the later elements in the list. While this article is for elementary educators and their practice with young people ages 5- 11, I argue that the importance of embracing love and knowledge of self, coupled with having respect for others, embracing and accepting diversity is the foundation for any journey towards critical consciousness for any person of any age. Without moving through this process towards developing a critical consciousness, any person or any movement will find itself combating the very practice of liberation it needs to win.

With this is mind, I join a host of other artists and activists who acknowledge the importance of unlearning and processing the impacts of racism and sexism. There are many social issues that affect our ability to move through the world as free agentic beings. Gender and race are centered in PJP's process in an intentional attempt to acknowledge the intersectional impact of white supremacy and heteronormative values in our personal lives as well as in our institutions and systems. In addition, PJP recognizes that young people are often at the center of these issues and systems, being directly impacted by oppressive systems and practices while systemically having the least amount of agency within them.

Ideas on combatting gender and race-based oppression underpin PJP and guided my thoughts along our journey to support young people in PJP through a process of naming (in)justice and creating/performing justice.

As a facilitator of performance-based change work, I am constantly learning and reflecting on my own relationships to both race and gender. This process of simultaneously guiding others and myself towards unearthing and imagining what justice looks like for us as individuals and as a larger collective has raised moments of fear and uncertainty in my work. I acknowledge this fear as both a trauma response and a form of trauma itself. In the book *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathways to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, author, healer, and trauma specialist Resmaa Menakem defines trauma as a "wordless story our body tells itself about what is safe and what is a threat" (8). Menakem positions trauma as something that always occurs in the body as opposed to an event that affects the body for a period of time. In the book, Menakem reflects on his experiences as a Black man, as well as his practice and research, to explore the process of acknowledging and healing from trauma caused by race and race-based oppression:

> In America, nearly all of us, regardless of our backgrounds or skin color, carry trauma in our bodies around the myth of race. We typically think of trauma as the result of a specific and deeply painful event., such as a serious accident, an attack, or the news of someone's death. That may be the case sometimes, but trauma can also be the body's response to a long sequence of smaller wounds. It can be a response to *anything* that it experiences as too much, too soon, or too fast. (Menakem 14)

Menakem asks readers, particularly those with white, Black or police bodies[1] to acknowledge and recognize trauma and its impact on the body thus positioning our bodies as a site for healing. He encourages readers to "slow yourself down and pay attention to your body. Be curious about what is going on there. Lean into your body's experiences and sensations. Do the same with uncertainty" (Menakem 290). Menakem's theories on body-based community healing underpin my work as a facilitator in PJP and helped define my praxis for thesis project. His work has encouraged me to slow down enough to pay attention to my body and discover how I heal through my body, and to understand that what I create with my body through performance actions can teach me about justice. In his book, Menakem provides a series of "Body Practices" that are meant to guide readers through a process of recognizing and releasing trauma from the body. Some of these practices include singing, humming, movement and rhythmic expression. Menakem's focus on the body has a direct connection to the embodied nature of theatre and performance. Through my work with PJP I began to draw parallels between Menakem's use of somatic practices and theatre as a methodology to acknowledge, release, verbalize, and enact our experiences with gender and racial justice. PJP then became a process for manifesting healing with and for ourselves through performance. In their book titled *Devising Critically Engaged Theatre with Youth: the Performing Justice Project*, Megan Alrutz and Lynn Hoare, co-founders of the Performing Justice Project, speak to the use of performance in similar ways, writing that "Embodied performance offers a way of seeing, feeling, critiquing, and understanding that relies on visceral and personal ways of knowing and absorbing our own and other's experiences" (3). Reflecting on the work of these three authors I could see there was a clear

[1] Menakem defines *the white body* as shorthand for the bodies of people of European descent who live in America*; the Black body* as shorthand for the bodies of people with African Decent who live in America and lastly, *the police body* as shorthand for the bodies of law enforcement professionals regardless of their skin color (16).

connection between embodiment and performance as well as embodied practices and healing. I was looking for a framework that could provide a concrete and justice-based approach to working in and with community.

I was introduced to the work of adrienne maree brown during a course on community engagement and outreach, taught by Amissa Miller, as a way to explore working in and with a community that aligns itself with a justice-based mission. Doula, women's rights activist, black feminist and author adrienne maree brown explores the concept of *emergence* in her book *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Expanding on the work of folks like Grace Lee Boggs and Octavia Butler, and pulling in theories from biomimicry[2], brown explores how one might engage in a process of constant, deliberate, and loving practice of change and transformation. In her book brown poses the question "How do we cultivate the muscle of radical imagination needed to dream together beyond fear?" (21). brown's principles of emergent strategy asks us to consider the ways we can implement practical tools that value the "small" and honor connection and trust as valuable components of change work. brown's use of the phrase "cultivate the muscle or radical imagination" urges me to consider the ways that principles of emergence might be performative, allowing us space to move the process of envisioning justice to our bodies.

Working to grow my own radical imagination, I designed this study to investigate how brown's theories of emergent strategy, might allow me as a justice-oriented theatre facilitator to acknowledge moments of fear in my own practice and intentionally move through those moments to perform racial and gender justice. Seeking to collaborate with youth participants to actively perform justice in our own lives and communities, I

[2] As defined by the Biomimicry institute, "Biomimicry is a practice that learns from and mimics the strategies found in nature to solve human design challenges — and find hope along the way".

investigate how an artist-facilitator can draw on theories around sustainable and loving activism to facilitate performance-based work that engages the body to move through fear and perform justice.

EXPLORING FEAR

What led me to study or analyze the way fear was showing up in my body and work with youth in applied theatre settings was a process of analyzing my own experiences with race-based harm and trauma. As a Black woman graduate student at a predominately and historically white university (PWI), racism both blatant and covert felt present and alive in my day to day interactions. Functioning in a space as "the only" or "one of the few" gave me the feeling of both being surveilled and unseen. In the Book, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice,* author Patricia Hill Collins discusses the politics behind visibility, gaze, and presence as it relates to Black Women's experiences in public places, as well as what constitutes this idea of public. "Surveillance seems designed to produce a particular effect – Black women remain visible yet silenced their bodies become written by other texts, yet they remain powerless to speak for themselves" (Collins 38). This idea of remaining visible, yet feeling powerless to speak for one's self, feels summative of my experiences with race-based aggressions. Due to the frequency of the happenings and my own curiosity, I began to pay close attention to what was happening in my body and how I was responding in situations where I was experiencing race-based aggression. One moment stands out for me in particular, as the moment where I began to understand my bodies response to these moments of harm.

I was walking out of the bathroom stall when I was immediately approached by a white woman who was insistent that I give or allow her to hug me. I was uncomfortable with this for many reasons, including that this situation felt unhygienic. Mostly though, my un-comfortability was rooted in two things: first, the lack of respect for my boundaries and second, my knowledge of previous racial harm inflicted at the hands of this individual. Comments about being "well-spoken for my age," as well as the assumption of an African ethnic background due to my name, rang loud in my ears as I watched this person approach me. In that moment, everything in me wanted to ask that person to please not touch me without my permission and to allow me some space to wash my hands before insisting I engage with them. Instead, I plastered on a huge fake smile, raised my voice an octave or two, and allowed this person to continuing hugging me while I exchanged pleasantries that I didn't mean in order to end the situation as quickly as possible. I replayed that moment over and over again in my head, frustrated with myself for not responding in a way that was authentic to me, to how I felt in that moment. To quote back to Collins, I felt very visible, yet rendered silent. It was through reading Menakem's book, *My Grandmother's Hands,* that I began to understand how and what my body was doing and feeling in this moment and others.

In his text, Menakem ask readers to consider the ways that racialized trauma has lived in all bodies. He states that while many politicians, activist and policy makers have attempted to address issues surrounding and caused by white supremacy through laws, rules and policy reform, the true eradication of white body supremacy won't happen until we address the (our) bodies. Menakem states. "It's not that we've been lazy or insincere.

But we've focused our efforts in the wrong direction. We've tried to teach our brains to think better about race. But white-body supremacy doesn't live in our thinking brains. It lives and breathes in our bodies" (5). Menakem then goes on to say that embodied trauma manifest itself as "fight, flee or freeze – or as some combination of constriction, pain, fear, dread, anxiety or unpleasant (and/or sometimes pleasant) thoughts, reactive behaviors, and or other sensations and experiences" (8). Here we see Menakem addressing the way that trauma becomes stuck in our bodies and is shown or released in our day to day interactions and feelings towards others. Specifically, he points to the responses that we, our bodies, may or may not be cognizant of but that manifest in our reactions and actions. Menakem's theories helped to illuminate what I was experiencing during that bathroom encounter. When I was faced with something my body deemed as dangerous, when my body remembered (and remembers) this trauma, my body sought to find a way to protect itself. Menakem offers flight, flee or freeze as a way to name your embodied response. For me, my response was to perform pleasant, to be polite, and to place the feelings of a white woman over my own. I did what I felt like I needed to do in order to remove myself from the situation and to find safety; so, I appeased the woman in front of me, and gave in to what she needed in that moment. Through an article written in the Huffington Post by Carol J Scott, "Stress, Health and African Women: A Black History Month Notation," I was introduced to the "tend and befriend" response to stress and or trauma. Citing author and researcher Angela M. Neal-Barnett and the book *Soothe Your Nerves: The Black Woman's guide to Understanding and Overcoming Anxiety, Panic and Fear,* Scott explains that to "tend and befriend" speaks to a form of trauma response that is often associated with Black

women. When attempting to manage trauma or stress, there is often a tendency to care for or attend to the needs of other people and repress our (my) own feelings of fear.

Considering this work, I began to draw parallels between the way I was responding to moments of fear and stress as a black body moving through and navigating a white space, to moments of fear and stress while facilitating topics surrounding race, gender injustice and justice. My responses to those moments were similar to my other life experiences in a lot of ways. I noticed that in tending and befriending, fleeing, and freezing, I was not staying true to who I am or my gifts as a facilitator. In moments of opposition, I was losing track of my own vision or purpose. I was wanting to ease through conflict and find the way out without confronting what was actually happening in the space. Feeling the pressure to appease everyone in the room and remove any aspects of discomfort or tension, I was not allowing for discomfort, be it productive or otherwise. With this new insight, I embarked on a thesis to study my own process of moving through fear in my work as an applied theatre practitioner. Through a collaboration with members of my MFA cohort, I was reintroduced to emotion wheels. There have been several created by scholars and teacher alike in order to help people name and identify what it is they are feeling on a deeper level. Robert Plutchik is often cited as the originator of the Wheel of Emotion[3]. The wheel serves as a visual representation of commonly named emotions in the center, then displaying the varying degrees and complexities of different emotions in the outer rings.

[3] There are several variations of the Wheel of Emotion. When attempting to find the source for this specific version has been linked the website, https://fairygodboss.com/career-topics/emotion-wheel# links the wheel to Robert Plutchik.

A lot of the feelings I had been experiencing and articulating were parts of the fear branch of the Wheel of Emotion. I was able to find some power in naming what was happening in and with my body during moments where I needed to decide how to act, how to respond and typically how to do that quickly when faced with a perceived threat. This is what inspired me to analyze how I can adopt ways of working that are rooted in activist and liberating practices in order to find a way to move through that fear and discover justice. My work in applied theatre with youth was a place where I was both finding joy and also navigating moments of fear. Joy feels imperative and necessary to any process that requires you to tangle with the heavy emotions and change efforts. My work with PJP and the young people in the PJP ensemble felt like a brave place to explore ideas, of fear, the body, and justice and find moments of joy or pleasure[4] within that process

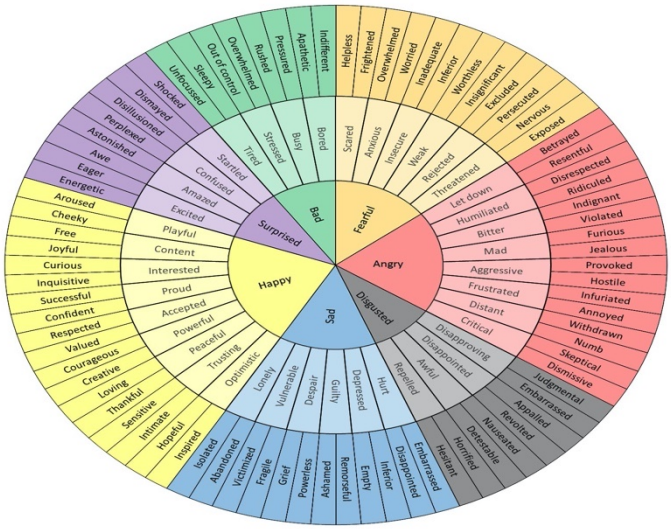

Figure 1: Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion

[4] In the book, *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*, author adrienne maree brown asks the question, how do we make social justice work a pleasurable experience? I think there are some amazing connections to be made between both of brown texts, *Emergent Strategy* and *Pleasure Activism, which I would like to study further but ultimately fell beyond the scope of this project.*

PROJECT OVERVIEW

For this thesis, I co-facilitated a Perming Justice Project (PJP) residency with a group of young people in Austin, TX. PJP was founded at The University of Texas at Austin and the Center for Women and Gender Studies by Megan Alrutz, Lynn Hoare, and Kristen Hogan in 2010. PJP uses a performance-based approach to engage young people in conversations surrounding race and gender, as well a racial and gender justice in their lives and communities. In *Devising Critically Engaged Theatre with Youth: The Performing Justice Project,* written by Alrutz and Hoare, the authors describe PJP as "theatre that supports young people as they imagine, create, and perform their individual and collective stories, and their vision(s) for more just and equitable communities" (1). The program focuses its work through three main questions that serve as the foundation for group and individual exploration:

> Who am I?
>
> What is (in)justice and how does it show up in my life?
>
> How do I perform justice? (Alrutz and Hoare 3)

Through a series of performance actions, defined as drama- and theatre-based strategies designed to explore power, oppression, and (in)justice, PJP facilitators engage in a rehearsal process that both explores concepts of justice and injustice and develops a performance that centers the voices, experiences, and work of the young people in the ensemble.

I was introduced to PJP by Megan Alrutz, my professor and head of my MFA program, during the first year of my graduate program. As a facilitator and an artist whose work is primarily with young people, I was drawn to several aspects of the PJP model. It offers an exciting challenge and opportunity to devise an original piece of theatre with

youth. It also focuses on a rehearsal process that values the aesthetic quality of the performance as well as the critical aspects of the work and justice-based content.

Given the content and required labor of a PJP process, I was interested in working with a partner to develop a PJP residency. Laura Epperson, a friend and fellow cohort member, and I had worked closely together on a Theatre for Dialogue piece on consent and sexual violence. Through that collaborative process, we discovered that when engaging in complex material that is close to your heart and body, having someone there to negotiate labor with can be a liberating practice. Given our friendship and our desire to further figure out how to navigate and use our different racial and ethnic identities in our work, we decided to work as a team and to pursue our own PJP residency. As co-facilitators Laura and I identify ourselves in the following ways. Laura as a white, able-bodied, neurotypical, cisgender woman who grew up in a middle-class household in the Midwest. I identify myself as a young Black woman, who is able-bodied, neurotypical, and cisgender who grew up "kind-a-broke" on the northwest side of Houston Texas. When working with a group of predominantly white and latinx youth, our identities show up in and impact the space and the happenings within the space differently. There was often an assumption from the young people, that I was doing PJP or engaging in this line of work because I was black. There were moments where certain questions felt directed at me because of my identity. There were moments were certain questions felt directed to Laura because of her identity. We wanted to learn how to offer each other, and ultimately the young people support as we all navigated the presence of race and gender in the space as we discussed it together as a group.

Ultimately, we implemented two PJP residences together. We piloted our first PJP residency in the summer of 2019 and then followed up with a 3-month residency in the fall

of 2019. The latter residency became the focus for this thesis research and my exploration of emergent strategy in practice.

Both of our PJP residencies took place in a residential organization for young people living within the foster care system. This residential organization is listed as a home for young people who the state defines as female or whose sex-assigned at birth was female. In total, our ensemble was comprised of roughly 20 young people with diverse racial, ethnic, and gender identities. By nature of the partner site, all of the young people we worked with had experienced severe emotional trauma, abuse and neglect that resulted in them being placed in a temporary living situation after being deemed unable to live in a home with relatives or a foster family. Our partner sites main concern was for the safety of the young people, this meant navigating a complex set of systems, rules and regulations set in place by the partner site. The rules were put in place to provide safety and structure and at times these same rules, seemed to press upon the young people agency and our ability to facilitate PJP.

Given the challenging contexts surrounding the youths' lives, and the subject matter that PJP explores, the PJP space was often ripe with past and current encounters and questions with racial and gender-based trauma, such as sexual abuse, racial discrimination, and the inability to decipher one's gender identity in a space that is marketed as a home for girls. With that, it's important to acknowledge the moments joy and self-discovery that offered a way to subvert in some ways and support in others the policies set in place by the partner site. To protect the privacy and safety of the young people involved in this study, the name of our partner site and the names of the young people involved in this project are omitted from the document.

Going into our second residency, I wanted to actively center aesthetic and artistic quality in our art making process and the final production. In the summer residency, my

partner and I centered the teaching of terms and justice-based language and the performance-making was often pushed to the side for the sake of extended dialogue. While I will unpack how I negotiated and found balance between performance-based exploration and dialogue centered learning later in the document, for our second PJP residency, we had a strong desire to simply center the performance-making process. To do this, we structured each rehearsal around an essential question and a word for the day. After an opening check-in, we began each rehearsal with a performance action called Two by Three by Bradford[5], a performance action created by Augusto Boal. This particular action ask participants to work together in pairs to create a sequence of gestures and sounds. Laura and I used the structure of the activity to ask our ensemble to reflect on the word of the day and to build a connection between the content (gender and racial justice) and the creation of gestures, sounds, and bits of performance. We would then move into roughly twenty minutes of an activated discussion surrounding our question for the day. Using performance actions such as visual mapping, various socio-metrics, and "Genderbread Person" worksheets[6], we aimed to engage participants in active dialogue at the top of every rehearsal. Learning from our previous residency, we made a point to transition into a performance making activity for the last forty minutes of each rehearsal to focus on an embodied exploration. We recognized that it was ok, necessary even, to begin making art even when participants are in different places with the concepts at hand. Laura and I knew that we were building towards a public performance that would include a combination of all the performance material we gathered in rehearsal. With that in mind, we made sure to diversify the type of art making we concluded with in each rehearsal. Some days we created community poems

[5] Please see the following for a description of the strategy.
Boal, A. (2002) Games for actors and non-actors, 2nd ed., trans. A. Jackson, London: Routledge.

[6] This worksheet is a free online resource designed to help folks move through concepts of biological sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual preference. The worksheet was created by Sam Killerman housed at www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com.

and other days we recorded one-line poems to use as voiceovers in the performance. We engaged in body-based actions like machine and we created tableaux and activated stage pictures. With the consent of the ensemble, we documented their work through pictures and video to reference later during the script building process. In our pilot PJP residency, Laura and I recognized that we missed an opportunity to bring in fellow teaching artists and friends who could introduce different ways of making and creating. As two cisgender women, we also felt it was important to bring in guest artists who held different identity markers from our own. We were able to introduce three guest artists who came in and added music and dance elements to our performance and helped enhance our discussions and exploration of gender and racial justice.

After 6 weeks of devising and rehearsing, Laura and I sat down with all our documented performance bits and curated a script to present to the ensemble for feedback. As a group, we then collaboratively edited, titled, and rehearsed our performance. Ultimately, we held two performances. One took place at our partner site for the staff and other young people living on site. The other performance took place at The University of Texas at Austin for an invited audience. We concluded our residency with a day of reflection and a viewing party so the ensemble could watch a video of their performance and celebrate their hard work.

METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative research study, I functioned as a co-facilitator and director for our daily rehearsals and final performance. In addition, my co-facilitator, Laura, and I designed and implemented an original curriculum based on the core PJP questions and PJP's collection of performance actions (Alrutz and Hoare 52). During rehearsals I acted as both an observer and a participant-facilitator. As I began this study, my goal was to

apply my learning from our pilot PJP project to a second PJP residency. During our first iteration, we met with our ensemble Monday-Friday, three hours a day for three weeks. This format proved to be tiring for the young people, as most days we only were able to move through ninety-minutes' worth of the planned activities. For this study and the second residency, we decided to have rehearsals twice a week for ninety minutes each, stretched over the course of nine weeks. As I state above, I wanted to use this residency as an opportunity to closely reflect on my experiences of navigating moments of fear and tension as they appeared in the PJP process.

In order to document my thoughts and experiences about the role of emergent strategies in my own work, I alternated between writing in a journal and voice recording my thoughts and reflections before and after each rehearsal. When documenting my pre-rehearsal thoughts, I reflected on what, if anything I was nervous, excited, or apprehensive about going into rehearsal. Moreover, these logs include information about my planning meetings with Laura, our goals for each session, and how I was navigating experiences of fear, tiredness, or any emotions I was feeling in my body in relationship to the PJP residency. In my post-rehearsal logs, I included a detailed account of the rehearsal, noting any moments of fear that I encountered and reflecting on how I engaged emergent strategies to move through moments of fear in each session.

In her book, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead,* Brené Brown states, "vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness" (37). An important part of my documentation process was being honest with myself about what I was feeling, which requires what Brown refers to as being courageous and vulnerable with my truth. During this PJP residency, as our relationship developed with our partner site and the amazing staff we worked with, I learned more about the

complex nature of the site. I was made aware that the site had a high turnaround rate for volunteers due to many volunteers feeling like working at the site was too emotionally taxing. There were moments where my own history with trauma and violence was stirred by the subject matter or held quietly while the young people voiced their own experiences. While the site had rules in place to prevent "over sharing" or "trauma bonding," moments of honesty and vulnerability are deeply woven into my methodology of creating this residency and exploring my research question. Prioritizing vulnerability with myself became vital to my process as a person and a researcher and I hoped that this practice would fractal itself into other areas of my work.

In addition to documenting my own experiences pre and post each PJP session, I also kept a log of all of the planning documents and rehearsal plans which served as artifacts for this research. Certain elements of the ensemble's work, like the material used to build the script, models created during rehearsal, and other artifacts also served as documentation and data for my research. Together, these sources of data allowed for a detailed look at how the use of emergent strategies affected my own facilitation and the work we were able to process and accomplish as a group. By reflecting on how the session plans developed over the course of the project, as well as analyzing my thoughts and actions related to moments of fear, I was able to see patterns related to each of the emergent strategies I studied. From these patterns, I began to develop new ideas about how to move through personal fears in applied theatre work, and the ways that theories on sustainable activism can serve applied theatre projects focused on social justice.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In the following chapters I explore how two elements of adriene maree brown's emergent strategy, namely "Fractals and valuing small scale growth" and "Honoring

nonlinear and iterative growth," showed up in my PJP work and shaped my applied theatre practice with youth. In chapter two, I examine how the act of valuing small-scale growth aided in my ability to trust the art making process and constantly push the PJP practice forward while valuing moments of not-knowing. In chapter three, I explore how honoring nonlinear growth and transformation appeared in my work and aided in my process towards imagining justice with the young people in the ensemble. In each of these chapters, I begin to address how these emergent strategies lend themselves to the other and ultimately offer a pathway to addressing facilitator fears and performing justice in applied theatre work. The research in both of these chapters demonstrates my own process of learning to value transformation and growth even on the smallest scale through storied moments with the young people and the moments of planning with my collaborative partner. In my final chapter, I discuss how emergent strategies might offer applied theatre practitioners a way of approaching challenges, including the recognition of missed opportunities for emergent practices and ways of engaging due to my own fears. I conclude by voicing how we—as facilitators, artists, and teachers—can use activist theory and practice to bravely embark on a process towards imagining and manifesting justice with young people through theatre.

Chapter Two: Fractals and Fear in Applied Theatre

"We are beginning to understand that the world is always being made fresh and never finished; that activism can be the journey rather than the arrival."
— Grace Lee Boggs

Fractals is the first Element of Emergent Strategy that adrienne maree brown introduces in her book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds.* brown begins the chapter by stating, "how we are at the small scale is how we are at the large scale" (52). This simple yet profound statement asks readers to consider the local—the classrooms, communities, familial structures, and work environments that we are all a part of. She invites us to consider how on these local levels and in these spaces we practice and implement the justice we seek from larger institutions and systems. Reflecting on her own personal experiences, brown goes on to say, "It was and is devastatingly clear to me that until we have a sense of how to live our solutions locally, we won't be successful at implementing a just governance system regionally, nationally, or globally" (52). In other words, we often knowingly and unknowingly repeat modes of working and engaging that adhere to the same set of existing conditions we find ourselves working against in other areas. brown lists "top down structures, money-driven programs, destructive methods of engaging in conflict, [and] unsustainable work cultures" as examples of ways of being and interacting that are representative of the larger problematic systems that governs are lives (52). With her discussion of fractals, brown presents the idea that change is something we can practice at the small, everyday levels in which we operate. We imagine, and then implement new ways of connecting and working. According to brown's theory, we then take those practices, thoughts, and questions with us to every new environment with the hope that what we practice here, locally, reverberates out and impacts the larger system.

Admittedly, fractals was the element of emergence that I struggled with the most in working through brown's book. Communities of Black Women, Black queer and Trans folks have historically acted and functioned as disruptors to systems and ways of being that other us and actively work against people who, because of their activism, have faced hatred, vitriol and violence. Out of necessity, people have carved out new ways of being and interacting with each other that have been either co-opted, disregarded, or ignored by the very people that this country lifts up and strategically places in positions of power. As a Black woman, I found myself disbelieving this world's ability to change—in the world's ability to follow the lead of those who've been pushed to the margins of society. While I never felt that my work at a local level was unimportant, I doubted the impact it would and could have on a society that only made lynching a federal crime in the year 2020[7]. adrienne maree brown cites Grace Lee Boggs as a mentor and source of inspiration at several points within her writing and a quote from Boggs eventually helped me to better situate this element of fractals in my body. Boggs states:

> Being a victim of oppression in the United States is not enough to make you revolutionary, just as dropping out of your mother's womb is not enough to make you human. People who are full of hate and anger against their oppressors or who only see Us versus Them can make a rebellion but not a revolution. The oppressed internalize the values of the oppressor. Therefore, any group that achieves power, no matter how oppressed, is not going to act differently from their oppressors as long as they have not confronted the values that they have internalized and consciously adopted different values. (Boggs 151)

[7] Please see "Congress Moves to Make Lynching a Federal Crime After 120 Years of Failure" Fortin, Jacey

From this quote I bring into my work Bogg's idea of working locally and internally by intentionally seeking to decolonize my ways of thinking and ways of working specifically with young people in applied theatre spaces. Valuing small scale change and growth urges me to value the ways that I and the people I'm in community with are working to envision justice for ourselves as individuals and as a collective. In this chapter, I discuss how and where the concept of fractals, specifically valuing small scale growth and change, appeared during this PJP process and shaped my approach to moving through moments of fear as a facilitator in justice-based applied theatre.

CONFLICT AND CULTURE IN JUSTICE WORK

Laura and I had just finished passing out index cards to everyone in the ensemble. We asked everyone to write down how they would define ethnicity using a word or a short phrase. The ensemble was given about three minutes to generate as many ways of defining ethnicity as they could. Our ensemble that day included a mix of young people who had participated in the previous residency, young people who'd only been to one or two rehearsals and folks who had been to almost every rehearsal since the second residency started. Laura and I were participating in the writing process while simultaneously encouraging the ensemble to write whatever came to mind and not to worry about being right or wrong. An ensemble member who worked with us during our pilot project called me over to read her responses to the prompt. I acknowledged the work she had done and then encouraged her to keep writing until the timer was up. As I was walking away, she called my name again and asked, "are these the right answers?" I continued to insist that at the moment we weren't focused on being right, just writing what we think based on any

past experiences or conversations. As I walked back to my seat I heard her say, “OMG. Just tell me!”

I perceived a few things to be happening in this moment. As mentioned previously, this young person had already participated in previous explorations surrounding race and ethnicity. After her last comment of “Just tell me,” I wondered if she was seeking an acknowledgement that she had indeed remembered our conversation from the pilot and had “the answer.” This same young person later expressed that she didn’t want anyone else to read her responses. I remember feeling guilty in that moment and wondering if I had caused this young person to not want to participate by not validating her responses to the prompt. Laura and I had made the ensemble aware that we would be taping these index cards to a poster, and then reading out all the ways our group defined ethnicity. Knowing our group, Laura and I had previously decided to have everyone write with the same color marker. We wanted to provide some anonymity and hopefully ease concerns about not knowing, or not being “smart.” I reminded this young person that no one would know which answers were hers unless she decided to share her thought process behind her responses. I received a quiet, “I don’t, and ok,” in response.

As I was heading back to my seat I overheard a conversation between another ensemble member and a houseparent who was also participating in rehearsal. The young person expressed a lack of confidence with their spelling and asked the house parent to write down her responses to the prompt. I overheard the house parent ask, “What do you think?” The young person responded by saying “I don’t know, what do you think?” The houseparent encouraged the young person to “say one word that comes to mind when thinking about ethnicity.” The young person mumbled an answer that was inaudible to both me and the house parent. After asking the young person to repeat themselves, the young person said, “I’m retarded. I don’t know. I’m dumb.”

The “R” word was used so often by the ensemble that our site partner took that opportunity to open up a dialogue surrounding why we should all refrain from using that language in reference to ourselves and in general. In response to this dialogue, this particular participant decided not to engage with the writing. Instead, she sat and observed for most of the remaining discussion. She eventually came around and started to vocally contribute her thoughts and ideas. She no longer used the “R” word but still ended each thought with a rushed and quiet statement about being dumb or stupid.

“Maybe justice right now is just getting them to say nice things about themselves” (Reflective Practitioner Journal 2 October 2019). I pulled this quote from my reflective journal, in an entry I made directly following this described rehearsal. At the time, I was surprised by the amount of negative self-talk that was happening in our rehearsal space. Typically, participants would begin to answer the question and then conclude by calling themselves dumb or saying that they just didn’t know. These statements would often come after Laura or I posed a question to the group or asked a particular person how they felt about what we were discussing. At the time, addressing negative self-talk seemed like an important part of our justice work together. As a teacher/facilitator I wanted to incorporate a pedagogy of love, as framed by author and activist bell hooks, into our PJP process. In her book, *All About Love: New Visions,* hooks states “To truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients—care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication” (132). In *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*, hooks helps her reader to further situate the purpose of bringing her recipe for love into classroom and other learning environments. She states, “When teachers teach with love, combining care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust, we are often able to enter the classroom and go straight to the heart of the matter, which is knowing what to do on any given day to create the best climate for learning (134).” As a facilitation

team, Laura and I worked to incorporate hook's recipe into our work with the ensemble. And yet, it was becoming difficult to engage in our performance actions and justice work when folks in our ensemble shut down or constantly disregarded their own thoughts and opinions about the subject matter. My guiding question became how do we address negative self-talk happening in the rehearsals? How might we work together to create a climate conducive to exploration and play?

During our pilot project, we might have heard a similar comment every now and then, but it wasn't nearly as pervasive and consistent as during this residency. "We are a different group, having different experiences, and that's ok" (Reflective Practitioner Journal 8 October 2019). When listening back on one of my recorded post rehearsal reflections, I repeated this phrase four times. In my voice, I can hear the uncertainty and the hope that if I repeated this affirmation, it truly would all be ok. I had assumptions about why there was so much self-deprecating language being used but I didn't quite understand it. I also had a lot of fear surrounding the fact that I didn't know how to handle this new group dynamic. I didn't know the right way to respond to what felt like a growing concern about the injustices the participants were placing on themselves. How could we create a Performing Justice Project if we couldn't stop self-deprecating language from permeating our creative space?

SHIFTING TOWARDS CHANGE

In his chapter *Creating Culture* Menakem defines culture as "how our bodies retain and reenact history" (245). Menakem goes on to say that "because culture lives in our bodies, it usually trumps all things cognitive—ideas, philosophies, convictions, principles and laws" (246). Here Menakem positions culture as the things we believe, the stories we tell about ourselves, and the things that the world and the people around us believe to be

true. If we want to change the culture of a group, a community or a space, Menakem reminds readers that we have to change the truths we hold deep within ourselves. As Menakem suggests, we cannot enforce a rule as a means to change culture. Rather, we have to create new stories. Emergent Strategy, in particular brown's discussion of fractals, provides a lens through which to shift culture, or as bell hook might suggest, the climate of the space. Towards the end of her book, brown provides tools and questions for readers to assess their individual or collective journey with emergent strategy. In the assessment of fractals, brown poses a question that began to shift my thinking and approach to our rehearsal process. The reflection asks readers to consider their own behaviors: "In three words, what am I embodying?" (185). Open communication, performance skills, and joy were the three responses I wrote in my journal, reflecting on ways of being and working that my collaborative partner and I were embodying based on our experiences with our pilot project. After reflecting on this question further, I realized I wasn't embodying the very skill that I actually wanted the young people to practice with themselves. I wasn't embodying—or publicly embodying rather—what it means to sit in ambiguity or to boldly embrace not-knowing. I was not displaying what it means to try, fail, and try again. Furthermore, I was asking our group to make a cultural shift simply by policing their language and expecting them to immediately comply. While all of this was well intended, and I do think asking the young people to refrain from using the "R" word was a necessary decision, I wanted my next steps to begin to tell a different story. I wanted to embody what grace and positive self-talk looked like in action, with the hope that a shift in my own culture and ways of knowing might "fractal out" to the larger ensemble. This quote from brown served as a reminder and source of inspiration, "It was and is devastatingly clear to me that until we have a sense of how to live our solutions locally, we won't be successful at implementing a just governance system regionally, nationally, or globally" (52). With

the ensemble, I situated myself as the local, implementing a change within myself with the hopes that this would cause a change in and with the group. In order to shift the culture of our rehearsals, I needed to become more transparent with my past and current struggles with race, gender, power, injustice and justice.

Later in the residency, I was working one-on-one with an ensemble member who once again responded to a question with an I don't know and a comment about being dumb. In that moment, I decided to not just respond to their statement with a "no you're not," and instead I decided to tell them a story.

When I was in high school, so a few years older than you. My Spanish teacher Seńorita Norton introduce to my class the Spanish teacher would be subbing for our class while she was on maternity leave. The new Spanish teacher was as dark as I was but spoke fluent Spanish. When she introduced herself, she told my class that she had been born and raised in Panama. She looked black like me. But she was from Central America. I didn't know any Black people who spoke Spanish, so I assumed that she was just a dark Latina Woman, but definitely not black. It wasn't until years later that I heard the term Afro-Latina and began to understand ideas of ethnicity and nationality.

From this story, the young participant and I developed a common place to begin a dialogue. The young person responded to my story with a slew of questions that ranged from, how long ago was I in high school to did I still know Spanish, and what did Afro-Latina mean and if I learned that at UT Austin. I found that the young person was then able to respond to the questions or ask me questions without reverting back to the negative self-talk from moments before. It felt like a moment where the power structures of participant, facilitator or adult, teen flattened a bit. We were two people engaging in conversation

surrounding our mutual discovery. From that moment forward, I began to be more open and transparent with the participants about the questions I had, as well as my own mistakes and learning process. I encouraged the ensemble to sit with me in moments of uncertainty by modeling that with my own behavior and responses. Laura and I continued to be mindful of risk in the scaffolding of our rehearsals, paying attention to moments where we needed to slow down to allow for discussion or more moments of transparency. In addition, we modeled with each other and in-front of the young people ways of being gracious with ourselves and others, especially in moments of not knowing or unlearning. Affirmations and apologies when needed became ways we as an ensemble practiced small scale growth and change.

LEARNING TO PERFORM JUSTICE

As the facilitator of an exploration surrounding racial and gender justice, I am in no way an expert on all things race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression and attraction. The focus of PJP is to explore concepts of naming injustice and creating/performing justice along with the with young people. As a practice and a way of preparing, Laura and I began to move through the same sequence of questions that we planned to ask the ensemble. Through my reflection and research, I realized that the ensemble doesn't always get a chance to see our questions, the places where we were or are confused during a planning meeting. In rehearsal, we are the people with the PowerPoint, the agenda, "the answers." My learning wasn't on display in the same way as their learning was, which made our rehearsals feel less like a communal exploratory space and more like a classroom.

On the day of our first performance, I called our group together for a pre-show circle, to offer some words of encouragement before we began. I did this by asking the

group to meet me outside for a quick "pow wow." Our community partner immediately and rightly corrected me and pointed out the connotation of the language I used. In that moment I was embarrassed, surprised, and disappointed with myself for not considering the language I was using. That moment of learning for me, happened publicly and it was an opportunity for me as the facilitator to embody what it looks like to make a mistake, apologize, correct, and move forward. I apologized to my community partner first and thanked her for addressing and correcting my language. I then rephrased my offer to the group, telling them we were going to have a quick check-in. One ensemble member who was paying the closet attention to the exchange, asked me what was wrong with that I said at first. I offered the historical and cultural context behind what a Pow wow actually is and its specific connection to Indigenous peoples, noting how that term has been appropriated and used incorrectly. The ensemble member then replied, "gotcha" and went on to converse with other members of the ensemble. The moment lasted all of three-minutes, and it was another moment for me to engage in the practice of small-scale growth and change in front of the participants. I needed to own that I had made a mistake. I needed to once again, situate myself as the local, and transform myself. In the chapter on fractals, brown addresses this attention to self by stating, "This doesn't mean to get lost in the self, but rather to see our own lives and work and relationships as a front line, a first place we can practice justice, liberation and alignment with each other and the planet" (53). My relationship with our community partner, and the ensemble was important to me. In that moment of injustice, small-scale growth and change meant as brown stated, seeing my life and my relationship as a place to practice creating and fostering justice with each other.

Every now and then, our ensemble would slip into old habits of thinking and I would hear the same self-deprecating language come back into our space. However, I wasn't hearing it near as often as in the beginning of our process. That felt like an important

success! I honored the small changes, by offering appreciations to the ensemble when I could see them purposely shifting their language or asking each other to use different language. By celebrating the small moments of transformation knowing that as a community we were beginning to trouble old cultures and ways of being. I learned to stop trying to change the young people or fix them. Like me, the ensemble is still in the process of learning and undoing. Through the moments described in this chapter, I learned to model a space where ambiguity, not-knowing, and making mistakes felt ok. I hoped everyone would participate in that with me—practicing news ways of being and seeing ripples of that new hope reverberate out into our separate and conjoined communities.

Chapter Three: Nonlinear and Iterative and Fear in Applied Theatre

"Sometimes the bravest and most important thing you can do is just show up."

– Brené Brown

Nonlinear and iterative is the fourth element of emergent strategy that adrienne maree brown introduces in her book. brown uses the combination of "Nonlinear"—not involving a straight line, and "Iterative"—the repetition of a verbal action or the iteration of an operation or procedure, as a way to describe the complex pathways towards change and change making (104). Political movements often serve as reference points for how we document and analyze what pathways toward change making looks like. brown points to Occupy and The Black Lives Matter movement as two examples of people organizing together to fight for and create justice. brown focuses on the people who are apart, connected, and adjacent to these political movements, suggesting that, "Uprisings and resistance and mass movement require a tolerance of messiness, a tolerance of many, many paths being walked at once" (119). Here, brown acknowledges that as we discover new ways of thinking and being, the process of discovery can be challenging. She reminds readers that "If we release the framework of failure, we can realize that we are in iterative cycles, and we can keep asking ourselves--how do I learn from this?" (105). Repetition here means forward progression and growth, instead of being held stagnate by our perceived failures. Iterative cycles help us to move through the fatigue and the challenges that come from working within spaces that seek to combat injustice. brown's chapter, "Nonlinear and Iterative: The Pace and Pathways to Change," asks readers to consider two questions: How might those of us involved in practices of imagining justice embrace and move through the complexity of the process? How might we embrace both the pleasure

and pain associated with the journey towards change (106). Nonlinear and iterative growth and transformation provides those of us connected to change work with a way to approach and manage failure, fatigue, and challenges.

In this chapter, I examine how brown's theories on nonlinear and iterative transformation helped me navigate moments of fear (failure, fatigue, and other responses and challenges) in my applied theatre project. I also discuss the tensions that arose when trying to put brown's theories into action in PJP. In looking at aspects of nonlinear and Iterative practices in my facilitation of PJP, I first examine the role of cycles and patterns. brown views repetition or iterative cycles as necessary steps that build towards forward progression and growth, encouraging readers to reimagine the role of perceived failures in our work. Secondly, I examine how I moved through moments of fear within my PJP work. brown's ideas about accepting patterns of perceived failure and messiness shaped my ability to figure out what justice looks like for myself and with the ensemble from moment to moment.

ACKNOWLEDGING FEAR IN THE JOURNEY

During our pilot project, I faced some important moments of fear that shaped where and how I wanted to apply and study concepts of nonlinear and Iterative from brown's emergent strategy in the second residency. For example, at the end of an early rehearsal, the ensemble members had already left and headed back to their respective places. Laura and I were in our performance space packing up our things and cleaning up left over trash from the day. I was feeling really good. We had just concluded an awesome rehearsal. A few days prior, Laura and I decided to pause our planned activities, to reconnect with our ensemble in order to move forward with everyone hopefully feeling heard and respected and in a place where they could fully engage with the work. Post that conversation, we

seemed to really pick up momentum. We were playing, laughing, and discovering together as a group. I felt a renewed since of energy coming off of a really good day of rehearsal. Laura and I were laughing about a funny moment in rehearsal, when we were approached by a staff member who shared concerns about possible "inappropriate behavior" from the young people in the ensemble. We learned in that moment that for safety reasons the site only allows one young person in the bathroom at a time. Unaware of this rule, we did not heavily monitor the young people's bathroom breaks and allowed multiple people to take breaks at the same time. We were further caught off-guard when in the following rehearsal we were informed that some of the young people in the ensemble would not be able to return to PJP related to issues within our bathroom break situation.

I experienced a wide arrange of emotions as we processed this information. I was navigating my role as an outsider who had developed community with a small portion of the population at this site, but ultimately still didn't know the complex rules and regulations of the site. It wasn't until we were in the process of beginning our second residency did I began to understand the bigger picture from the site's perspective. The rule surrounding bathroom usage, while it didn't seem to support PJP and our philosophies surrounding choice, it was a safety procedure put in place to stop possible grooming behaviors and sexual assaults. Trauma's that this site has witnessed and were working to prevent. At the time however, I wasn't aware of how some of these rules were in place to support and protect, I was afraid that in my excitement to start the project, I had failed to ask necessary questions about the rules and regulations set in place by the site. I was afraid that I had let down or disappointed the young people in our ensemble for failing to, or not knowing how to advocate for their continued participation with PJP. I was afraid we had lost the trust of our site partners and possibly the ability to continue PJP. Lastly, I was afraid that I was out of my depth of knowledge, struggling to balance my views on young people and agency

with the safety concerns that governed the sites policies. I let myself sit with those emotions for several days, allowing myself the space to truly feel and process the many fears and questions that surfaced. One of the biggest questions became how to move forward with the small group that was permitted to stay in PJP?

Following the PJP model, we were planning to end our residency with a public performance. As the rehearsals went on, various situations and challenges like the one mentioned above resulted in inconsistent attendance and challenges in working toward a cohesive performance product or anything that could be shared with an audience. With all of the challenges, I began to talk myself out of pushing towards a performance, thinking that avoiding a public sharing would be the most generous option for the ensemble as a whole. I felt nervous and anxious about inviting colleagues, friends, and other PJP teaching artists to a performance I wasn't sure was going to happen; I wasn't sure that we could get a performance "ready." Ultimately, Laura and I decided to shift away from our pubic performance to focus instead on a small sharing for about 4 or 5 staff members at our partner site who offered to be in attendance. There were a number of challenges and unforeseen circumstances that led to that decision. And yet, in retrospect I knew that I let my fear of failure or perceived failure push me towards a decision that didn't honor the time and effort those young people, and Laura and I, put into the project. Fear pushed me into believing that the performance would only reflect a loss of time to refine and rehearse, a loss of momentum, and that nothing good could come of it. I was approaching the creative work from a deficit mindset rather than lifting up the assets of the ensemble or considering the value of our particular challenges. Going into our second residency in the fall, I was determined to push past the pride and fears that were stirred up in the pilot project and work diligently to have that performance. Importantly, with each new level of understanding and growth in this project, I experience new opportunities to face my fear and discomfort.

ACKNOWLEDGING GROWTH IN PROCESS

> "Update! Our next two Tuesday rehearsals have to be canceled because of a conflict with scheduled activities…horse therapy. Majority of the ensemble will be attending... which the novelty of horses is objectively cooler than PJP, so ok…it'll be ok. Laura and I need to discuss how we are going to move forward since we are losing this time... but everything will be fine" (Reflective Practitioner Journal 9 October 2019)

Six rehearsals into our fall residency, I recorded the journal entry transcribed above. Relistening to this entry, it is comical to hear the amount of stress in my voice. If I was being honest with myself, I did not think that everything would be fine; I was frustrated. That week, only one young person from our ensemble attended rehearsal. A portion of our ensemble had to get haircuts while another portion of our ensemble couldn't attend due to what site staff referred to as behavioral issues. To an extent, I expected a certain level of fluctuation with attendance and participation. However, in revisiting this particular journal entry, I see where and how my perceptions around a continuous "loss" of time was once again stirring up my fears surrounding our ability to move towards a public performance. I recall that I thought this PJP residency would be different because I would work hard to mitigate any issues that might arise that would lead to a loss of time. I would know the rules better and would work with our site partner to keep things flowing. What I failed to realize was that even if we followed all the rules and regulations of the site perfectly, sometimes things just happen. Justice work is messy. Young people

living in foster care have a lot of things going on and our partners were navigating the needs of a many people and the challenges of many systems, not to mention significant trauma faced by the young people. While I thought our pilot project was amazing, I still perceived some level of failure on my part as the facilitator for not being able to get us to a final performance for an outside audience.

The moment I found out about the scheduling conflict with horse therapy, I moved into the same deficit-based thinking that led to canceling the performance in our pilot project. My body repeated that same feeling of fear that settled into my stomach. Reflecting on this moment of fear months later, I can see that I hadn't truly changed my thinking or the way I was approaching my work. I was merely trying to remain in control and the moment I felt that control slip; I was right back in the place that after the pilot project I said I did not want to be.

With all of the scheduling conflicts, our site partners suggested that we needed to cancel our Tuesday rehearsals. After receiving this information, Laura and I sat down to discuss how we should move forward. In some ways, I felt or had assumed that the structure of the school year would provide more structure and consistency within our project as compared to our summer pilot project. As Laura and I were learning more about our partner site, we realized that change, and the ability or need to make shifts was an inherent part of working with this organization. With that in mind, I wondered if we were using the wrong performance medium to explore the work. Our mentor, Megan Alrutz has used Digital Storytelling in past projects with youth. In her book, *Digital Storytelling, Applied Theatre & Youth: Performing Possibilities*, Alrutz frames digital

storytelling as “an applied theatre practice that relies on the intentional integration of live performance-making with digital representations” (13). With digital storytelling, the possibility to have each young person create and contribute to the final product, without needing the time to rehearse as an ensemble seemed more attainable. I remember thinking that there just wasn’t the time to devise a live performance in the way we originally intended. Laura and I decided to table the conversation about our performance possibilities and come back to it after having our own individual time to process.

After some time, Laura and I discussed what our priorities should be given the goals of PJP, the lives of the young participants, and our own desires around performance and justice. Following adrienne maree brown’s lessons from studying movements and uprisings, “Solidarity can look so many different ways” (112). Ultimately, we decided that leaning into our expertise, specifically our backgrounds in theatre and performance—and not digital storytelling, was what felt most generous for supporting or being in solidarity with the group to “perform justice.” Knowing we had a lot of challenges to address, we still decided to go forward with live performance as the means through we showcased our work. After checking in with our individual faulty advisors, Laura and I realized there was no right or wrong way to approach our devising process, but that it was ok to lean into our strengths and expertise as we struggled to move the group forward.

I began to see that there was a path that both honored our skillset and the work of the young people, and I didn’t want to let my fears of failure dictate decisions on how to move forward. Throughout our residency, my reflective journal became a place for me to think through the action of writing. In a following entry I wrote, “Using pressure to make

a thing happen does not feel emergent" (Reflective Practitioner Journal 22 October 2019). One-way brown frames Emergent Strategy is as "ways for humans to practice complexity and grow through relatively simple interactions" (20). Our decision to stick to a pathway that felt challenging but true to our collective aim to keep the PJP practice in the body was, as brown stated, a "simple interaction," first with myself and then later with my collaborative partner. One way to practice the theories surrounding nonlinear and iterative growth and transformation is to honor that sticking to a particular path, despite hardship or challenges, is a form of justice. I remember thinking, "maybe now, instead of walking this path with hesitancy, we will run and trust the ground beneath us."

ACCEPTING THE PATH TO PERFORM JUSTICE

Although we planned for a public performance at the end of PJP, the intended audience would be limited in order to protect the privacy of the young people. Laura and I wanted to make sure the community members and other young people at the partner site could attend. This list included case workers and other staff members who had direct contact with and impact in the lives of the young people. During rehearsals, it became clear that the young people in the ensemble had complex relationships with the authority figures in their lives. The performance was a chance for the young people to have the space and time to express their questions, frustrations, dreams and desires in front of the adults in their lives, making those adults unique stakeholders in our process. I could see and believed in the value of the work the young people were doing in rehearsal every day. I wanted the beauty of our process to be visible and recognizable in the final product. Although I was

committed to moving toward a final performance and inviting key stakeholders, I still danced with old patterns of fear and deficit thinking. When it felt like we were losing time to refine and rehearse our performance, I feared that the stakeholders both in my life and the young people's lives wouldn't see value in what we were doing, rendering the prospect of continuing this developing partnership null and void. I kept revisiting brown's theories to remind myself of that this process can and will be messy, and that is ok. I had to remember to take deep breaths, trust the process, and continue onward.

To aid in our process towards preparing for a performance, Laura and I crafted our rehearsals plans intentionally balancing the time we spent introducing new questions for inquiry and activating those questions through embodied performance actions. As teaching artists, scaffolding explorations that flow into the next became challenging as we faced the unpredictable ebb and flow of attendance for our ensemble members. It was important to both Laura and I that the young people in our ensemble felt welcomed and able to participate no matter if they had attended all rehearsals, missed several in a row, or decided to join later into the process. This meant rethinking how I viewed our path toward unpacking the justice-based material, our path towards a public performance. How could we scaffold a model for exploration that would fit the needs of the ensemble became the driving question for me.

In writing about nonlinear and Iterative strategy brown defends, "the messy chaotic beauty of transformation" (119). brown reminds readers that often in the process of discovering new ways of being, movements, and the individuals attached to these movement can often be subjected to quick and rash critique of the movement of the work.

"Uprisings and resistance and mass movement require a tolerance of messiness, a tolerance of many, many paths being walked at once" (brown 119). Brown's acknowledgement that the process of imagining and implementing change is difficult and complex stayed with me as I navigated fear in my own body. While having a critical lens towards devising new inclusive ways of being is useful, not embracing what might feel uncomfortable, strange or messy keeps us stagnate rather than propelling us forward. As brown's theory on fractals suggests, we must be the change we wish to see implemented. As the facilitator, I had to learn to embrace the messy and not view our unique process, with all of its patterns of challenge as a hinderance to the work, to the performance. To think in this way, I first had to stop thinking from a space of deficit or lack. I revisited brown's words: "If we release the framework of failure, we can realize that we are in iterative cycles, and we can keep asking ourselves-how I learn from this?" (brown 105). Leaning into brown theories surrounding iterative cycles became a tool for planning and implementing our rehearsal process. In practice, this meant having multiple plans of actions for each rehearsal that considered the possibility of working with just two people, integrating two new people into the process, or engaging the entire ensemble all at once if everyone was able to attend. Often this looked like creating performance actions that could result in small adjustable performance pieces that could quickly be modified to include another ensemble member or could work solo. In drafting the script for the PJPP performance, we intentionally marked performance bits to include blank spaces for young people to add additional lines or blocking into the performance up until an hour before show time. As an artist and performer myself, I had to remember how to lean on my expertise to help the ensemble let

go of rigid views about what a "professional" or "quality" performance entailed. The quality didn't show up in perfect memorization or transitions on stage. Rather it showed up in how proud the young people felt of their work, and how the performance itself was an act of creating Justice.

During the talk back at our UT performance one of the young people in the ensemble responded to a question inquiring about their experience performing for this audience by saying, "we're actually being heard, and like for y'all coming here and us playing and acting it out for y'all, y'all actually can say something and [we're] being heard. I don't how to explain this but yea, it just feels great" (PJP Performance 22 November 2019). There was something powerful about having people sit down and listen, sit down and view the work they created. In a society that often requires young people to sit down and listen to the voices of adults, shifting that power dynamic was an act of creating justice. As another adult in the room, I owed it not just to myself but to those young people to not stand in the way of their process. brown concludes her chapter on nonlinear and iterative by stating, "we are all learning what it means to be somebodies who shape the future, to operate at the scale of transformation" (121). For me, operating at the scale of transformation looked like acceptance—accepting and trusting an ever changing and ever-growing process, not just as what is, but as what is necessary.

REFLECTING ON EMERGENT STRATEGY IN PERFORMING JUSTICE

In *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathways to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies,* Resmaa Menakem speaks to the idea of clean pain. Menakem frames clean pain as purposefully choosing integrity over fear.

> Healing trauma involves recognizing, accepting and moving through pain-clean pain. It often means facing what you don't want to face-what you have been reflexively avoiding or fleeing. By walking into that pain, experiencing it fully, and moving through it, you metabolize it and put an end to it. In the process, you grow more room in your nervous system for flow and coherence and build your capacity for further growth. (Menakem 165)

Change work is full of uncomfortable and fear inducing moments. Reflecting back on my process with PJP, there are several moments where I was a as Menakem states, avoiding or fleeing the emotions that arose within me when faced with a challenging moment. Menakem's call for us to move through our fears and toward our clean pain calls me back to brown's theories on nonlinear and iterative growth and transformation as a tool for choosing integrity. In the next iteration of PJP or any other project that centers justice and change work, it is my hope to further embrace repetition. I also want to lean into multiple ways of being and working as an intentional pedagogical practice and not just as a byproduct of challenging circumstances.

Partnering with an organization that serves young people within the foster care system was both an exciting and complex relationship to navigate. There are rules and systems in place designed to provide a safe and structured environment for the young

people to live and receive the necessary resources provided by the site. Many of the rules are designed to heal or prevent further trauma. My ignorance surrounding those rules and the complexity of the systems caused moments that seemed to impede on our ability to engage in our planned activities. Specifically, with attendance this often meant that we wouldn't know which of our ensemble members could attend rehearsals until about two hours before hand. This dance of negotiating how PJP fits within the day to day lives and routines of the young people demanded I as the facilitator be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the space and generous with myself around the learning that comes from unplanned, nonlinear and iterative practices.

Chapter Four: Reclaiming Resilience

"Transformative Justice, in the context of emergent strategy asks us to consider how to transform toxic energy, hurt, legitimate pain, and conflict into solutions."

-adrienne maree brown

AN ASIDE

As I write this, I—like many people across the world—am currently social-distancing in an effort to minimize the spread of Covid-19. Over the last few weeks, I've struggled to embrace and adapt to what are ultimately necessary changes. I am feeling grief and hurt over the loss of celebrations and moments to mark this research and gather with family and friends. I feel pain over being separated from family and friends. I am frustrated with our government's response to this pandemic. I feel anger over the long standing and structurally upheld racism in America that is responsible for the disproportionate number Covid-19 related deaths in the Black community[8]. As the number of cases rise, and the ramifications of this pandemic settle closer and closer, I've struggled to find the desire or the energy to reconnect with the heat that led me to this thesis project. My writing process slowed and everything I envisioned for this document felt too far to reach. As a person situated within the academy, conversations surrounding rigor and productivity feel constant even during this season of unprecedented changes in circumstances. A capitalistic society has taught me to assign value to myself based on productivity, output, and what I can achieve. It has taught me to remove the emotions, obstacles, and ideas that impede upon my ability to produce. I was, maybe even am, feeling lost trying to muddle through my emotions and life circumstances that extend far beyond my graduate thesis project. In

[8] Please see "If COVID-19 Doesn't Discriminate, Then Why Are Black People Dying at Higher Rates?" Moore, ReNika

an attempt to find a pathway forward, or maybe even backwards, I turned back to adrienne maree brown and *Emergent Strategy* to find hope for a personal and larger communal shift. In the chapter "Resilience: how we recover and transform," brown speaks to resilience as an element of emergent strategy. I felt led to disrupt the original outline for this conclusion and speak to my current reality but wasn't sure how it would connect to my larger discussion surrounding fear in my applied theatre work with youth. "Part of resilience of nature is that nothing in nature is wasted" (brown 131). This quote from brown helped me to consider the ways in which my current experiences might be a vital part of this larger reflection and inquiry. In order to move forward, I need to address the fears and uncertainty that I am currently facing. I need to not view this time and my emotions as wasted, but rather as things that fuel my life, work, and practice and inform the conversation surrounding traversing fear and trauma in my body.

As brown's chapter on resilience continues, she begins to tie in ideas and principles of transformative justice, as transformation feels inherently tied to emergence, "transforming the conditions that make injustice possible" (126). brown provides a definition for Transformative Justice that includes the following four ideas. Transformative Justice:

> Acknowledges the reality of state harm.
>
> Looks for alternative ways to address/interrupt harm, which do not rely on the state.
>
> Relies on organic, creative strategies that are community created and sustained.
>
> Transforms the root causes of violence, not only the individual experience.
>
> (brown 135)

As the title of this chapter on resilience suggests, I've been wondering how we as a larger community recover from the effects of this pandemic? How do we traverse through our

collective and individual fears? There is a wave of people who are as brown puts it, acknowledging the reality of state harm and the systems that are currently causing thousands of Americans to struggle needlessly. The systems that once felt firmly set in place are now bending to accommodate a need for safety. Is it possible that they can continue to bend or even break to accommodate a need for justice? Through this season, I hope that we continue to find new and creative ways of connecting and being in community with one another. I hope that we continue to help each other find solutions, and moments of joy in the midst of hard times. I hope we continue to question and fight against the oppressive systems and ways of being that don't serve the American public as a whole. I hope that in our personal lives, in our local communities, and those at the state level, continue to fight for an inclusive, sustaining, and transformative justice.

In *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathways to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies,* Menakem includes a quote from Rosa Parks to begin one of his chapters: "I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear" (Parks qtd in Menekam 187). There are a lot of things I currently don't know about my future, the world, and where we are all headed. What I do know is that I have to continue to find the heat in my work. For me, working with youth and writing about my work with youth *is* creating Justice. Through the completion of this thesis project, both the writing and my work with the young people, I'm taking away three key findings that will continue to aid in my continued work in applied theatre settings with youth. I also believe that these three discoveries might help guide me through this season, and the next. I hope we can all be generous with ourselves as we navigate fear and uncertainty and decide for ourselves what must be done—in our applied theatre work and our lives.

DISCOVERIES

When reflecting further on my findings within this study, one theme that emerged consistently was the need to dismantle deficit-based thinking. I think it's important to begin this by saying, moving away from deficit-based thinking does not mean that you can't acknowledge when situations or circumstances are less than ideal, urgent or even harmful. Dismantling deficit-based thinking requires us to change how we address and approach the problem or injustice, once we've acknowledged its existence. Finding, highlighting, and supporting the assets, gifts, and talents within the PJP ensemble provided me the tools necessary to move through my own fear and the difficulty of the situation. An asset-based approach acted as my flashlight through the darkness that was my own fears. I see how I came into this project, so ready to "do the work" of exploring gender and racial justice with youth, that I allowed myself to get caught up in everything that I felt was hindering that goal instead of honoring the beautiful ways the ensemble, my co-collaborator, and site partners were showing up and investing in the project. brown rightly reminds us that "One of the primary principles of emergent strategy is trusting the people" (214). I've found that a key part of trusting people, as brown suggests, means that when challenges arise, lean in and support the assets of the people you've chosen to be in community with. In this way, I discovered new paths towards justice. Connected to this idea of dismantling deficit-based thinking is letting go of false urgency. When I think of urgency, I consider the ideas, ways of being and working that I've felt needed to happen immediately and in a very specific way. False urgency for me showed up in feeling like I needed to follow the perfectly scaffolded rehearsal path that Laura and I created. This false sense of urgency showed up in me feeling like I had to make sure every young person in the ensemble walked away with a full understanding of race, ethnicity, and gender. That notion was impossible, because I firmly believe no one is an expert or has a "full" understanding of any of these

ideas. I also believe everyone should be allowed to move through their own journey towards unpacking these terms for themselves, going through a process of learning, discovering, unlearning and repeat. However, there were moments when I let the weight of living and maneuvering through a world that feels and is so harmful, force me into a sense of false urgency, and unknowingly dumping the weight of that pressure onto the young people. While I am an advocate for youth agency, and the importance of having the input and ideas of young people included and centered in the process of making change, it is unfair to me and the young people to feel as if I have to teach them everything and they have to become experts so the fate of the world is saved. In her chapter on resilience, adrienne maree brown discusses *Liberated Relationships* as another way we can become strong and healthy after facing challenges of any kind (134). She states:

> Relinquish Frankenstein: You are not creating people to be with, or work with, some idealized individuals made of perfect parts of personality that you discovered on your life journey. You are meeting individuals with their own full lives behind and ahead of them. Stop trying to make and fix others, and instead be curious about what they have made of themselves. (brown 143)

Relinquishing Frankenstein or urgency for me means allowing the young people you are working with to have questions, to have moments of not knowing and even moments of not caring. My job as the facilitator is not to create "social justice warriors." It is my job to guide them through an art making process that centers exploration, and encourages moments of transformation, or deep questioning, leaving space and possibility for discovery. brown's theories encourages me to remember to be invested and curious about

who those young people are each day we are together and to let the young people decided what the future looks like for them. Just as I am figuring out who I'm becoming.

A second discovery that emerged through this study is the belief that vulnerability and modeling can change cultures. Moments of vulnerability and transparency have often proved to be scary for me, and I imagine for a host of other people as well. As a facilitator, I've found that intentional moments of vulnerability craft space for moments of radical honesty and exploration. In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom,* author, bell hooks, speaks to vulnerability and its necessity in spaced of education and communal learning.

> When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks. (Hooks 21)

As hooks suggests, in order to engage in a communal process of exploration, the teacher or facilitator in my case, has to be willing to model what it looks like to take risks, and be vulnerable during any learning or creative process. Being aware and focusing on the somatic is what allowed me to be more vulnerable with the ensemble and with myself. Being curious about what my body was experiencing and feeling gave me the courage I needed to show up for the ensemble with my whole self and not the expert facilitator version of myself. This attention to the somatic feels inherently tied to brown's theories on resilience. Menakem speaks to resilience as an embodied practice by stating, "Resilience

isn't just about responding to—or getting through—a difficult experience. Resilience also manifests in a form that's more about being than doing" (51). Here Menakem's emphasis on being rather than doing suggests that a key aspect of resilience is less about actions and more about how we are showing up in the space. Menakem goes on to say, "resilience is not a thing or an attribute, but a flow. It moves through the body, and between multiple bodies when they are harmonized" (51). Vulnerability and resilience have often like contrasting ideas and ways of being. Both Menakem and brown's scholarship has helped me to discover the link between resilience, vulnerability and the body. Resilience and vulnerability are methods designed to honor the bodies journey towards wholeness, discovery and justice both individually and collectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the writing and sharing of this document, I would like to advocate for an openness and willingness to embrace the somatic, and body-based practices as a method for creating, learning, discovering and reflecting on our own experiences navigating applied theatre work with youth. When I began this study, I felt a lot of apprehension surrounding study myself and my experience moving through my PJP residency. I felt that since I wasn't studying the young people or looking to qualitatively analyzing change within the young people, my study wouldn't matter or be valued in the same way. I now realize the importance in starting with the local, the self, and paying attention to how your body is showing up and affecting the space. Carving out brave spaces for young people to be able to explore and create art requires an awareness of how your role as the facilitator greatly shapes the ability of that space to be what the young people are requesting. It is my hope that applied theatre artists continue to approach work with young people as both a

student and a teacher, a player, and director and lastly a person committed to finding and creating justice with young people.

CLOSING POEM

"Reclaiming Resilience" by Faith Hillis

I am resilient.
Not because of my will
But because they have seen the past
Because I have seen what is
Because you have closed your eyes and dreamt many dreams
and because together we envision what will be

I am resilient
Not because I don't feel pain
But because of the hands I've gotten to feel along the way
Because of long hugs and comfortable shoulders
Because I'm worthy of giving and receiving support
and because I can rest in the arms of uncertainty and lie within the peace of discovery

I am resilient
Not because words don't hurt me
But because I've learned to listen with my whole body

Because I feel the vibrations of change pulsing at frequencies I've now leaned to recognize
Because I've heard stories that traverse time
And because I've heard a voice from deep within

I am Resilient
Not because I've tasted defeat
But because I've tasted joy
Because I've learned to fill myself before pouring into others
Because I'm full of possibilities and ideas
and because I've been gifted a seat at a table we chose and built together

I am Resilient
Not because I have to be
but because of the calming scent of rest
because the candle of laughter burns just as bright as the candle of fear
because I've learned both have a place
and with the extinguishing of flames comes the scent of a new path ahead.

I am Resilient
not because they need me to be
but because my body has recognized its ability to flow
its ability to grow
its ability to change and create change

APPENDIX A: EXPLORATION PATH

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Week One
Ensemble & Performance Foundation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Rehearsal One

Guiding Question: What is PJP? What is an ensemble?
Goals:
Begin to get to know PJP ensemble members.
Overview the goals, process, and ways of working of PJP</td><td>Agenda

Opening
Arrive and Settle In
Land Acknowledgement
Agenda / Introductions
Engage
PJP Overview
Explore
2x3xBradford
Free-Write
Number Up
Closing
I Have a Voice</td></tr>
<tr><td>Rehearsal Two

Guiding Question:
How will we work together?
Goals:
Continue to get to know ensemble members?
Identify individual and ensemble goals
Outline ensemble agreements</td><td>Agenda

Opening
Agenda & Check-in
Engage
2x3xBradford
Explore
Ensemble Goals & Agreements
Stop/Go/Jump
On the Line
Closing
I Have a Voice</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Week Two
Identity and Justice Foundation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Rehearsal Three

Guiding Question: Who am I?
Word of the Day: Discover
Goals:
Review/add to ensemble agreements
Begin to explore our individual identities
Practice creating and interpreting meaning through physical expression</td><td>Agenda

Opening
Agenda & Check-in
Engage
2x3xBradford
Explore
Ensemble Agreements Continued
Free Write / Free Expression
Identity Portraits
Statues
Closing</td></tr>
</table>

	• I Have a Voice
Rehearsal Four **Guiding Question:** *How can I use movement and gesture to express who I am?* **Word of the day:** Express **Goals:** • Continue to explore our individual identities • Create and interpret meaning through physical expression	**Agenda** **Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Engage** • 2x3xBradford **Explore** • Truth About Me + I Come from a Place • Identity Portraits, Part 2 • Identity Gesture Sequence **Closing** • I Have a Voice
Week Three Power & (In)Justice Foundation	
Rehearsal Five **Guiding Question:** *What does respectability have to do with identity?* **Word of the Day:** Respectable **Goals:** • To define race, ethnicity, gender, and attraction/desire • To explore the relationship between respectability and power in our lives • To practice collaborating to create and interpret meaning through physical expression	**Agenda** **Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Engage** • 2x3xBradford **Explore** • Poster Dialogue • Respectability Politics (Sculpting) **Closing** • I Have a Voice
Rehearsal Six **Guiding Question:** *How do obstacles and external messages shape our lives?* **Word of the day:** Injustice **Goals:** • Practice creating and interpreting meaning through physical and artistic expression • Continue to explore our identities and the external factors that shape our lives and the way we move through the world • Explore concepts of power and injustice	**Agenda** **Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Engage** • 2x3xBradford **Explore** • Mapping External Portraits • Creating Obstacle Courses **Closing** • I Have a Voice

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Week Four
Gender & Attraction</th></tr>
<tr><td>Rehearsal Seven
*Rehearsal schedule was augmented to one day a week to accommodate scheduling changes.

Guiding Question: What does it mean to be a woman?
Word of the day: self-affirmation
Goals:
Reflect on gender stereotypes
Acquire and/or reinforce gender-related vocabulary
Reflect on positionality in gender and sexuality markers
Reaffirm personal power related to gender
Experiment with gender and embodiment</td><td>Agenda
Guest Facilitator, siri gurudev
Opening
Agenda & Check-in
Engage
2x3xBradford
Explore
“Being a woman means to me…”
Genderbread Person Activity
Positionality Activity
My Gender Statue
Closing
I Have a Voice</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Week Five
Race & Ethnicity</th></tr>
<tr><td>Rehearsal Eight

*Rehearsal schedule was augmented to one day a week to accommodate scheduling changes.

Guiding Question: Where do we notice race and/or ethnicity in our lives?
Word of the day: Awareness/Aware

Goals:
Define and discuss race and ethnicity
Explore how race and ethnicity show up in our lives
Create 6-word stories and gestures about race and ethnicity</td><td>Agenda

Opening
Agenda & Check-in
Engage
2x3xBradford
Explore
Defining Race & Ethnicity (Video)
Six-Word Stories about Race
Closing
I Have a Voice</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Week Six
(In)Justice</th></tr>
<tr><td>Rehearsal Nine</td><td>Agenda

Opening</td></tr>
</table>

*Rehearsal schedule was augmented to one day a week to accommodate scheduling changes. **Guiding Question:** How do power and injustice show up in our lives? **Word of the Day:** Power **Goals:** • To define power and explore how it operates, both interpersonally and systemically • To discuss statistics connected to racial and gender injustice • To create short performance(s) of statistics	• Agenda & Check-in **Engage** • 2x3xBradford **Explore** • Great Game of Power • Activating Statistics **Closing** • I Have a Voice
Week Seven Rhythm & Justice	
Rehearsal Ten *Rehearsal schedule was augmented to one day a week to accommodate scheduling changes. **Guiding Question:** *How do we perform Justice? What does Justice for us look like*? **Word of the day:** Rhythm **Goals:**	**Agenda** **Guest Facilitator, Michael Love**
Week Eight Justice & Performance	
Rehearsal Eleven **Guiding Question:** *How do we perform Justice? What does Justice for us look like?* **Word of the day:** Justice **Goals:** • Review performance outline • Record race + ethnicity definitions/thoughts • Identify speakers in opening section	**Agenda** **Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Explore** • Rehearse and Revise Script **Closing** • I Have a Voice
Rehearsal Twelve	**Agenda**

Guiding Question: *How do we perform Justice? What does Justice for us look like?* **Word of the day:** Justice **Goals:** • Review performance outline • Rehearse for performance	**Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Engage** • Zip Zap Zop **Explore** • Rehearse and Revise Script **Closing** • I Have a Voice
Week Nine Performance	
Rehearsal Thirteen **Goals:** • Review performance outline • Rehearse for performance	**Agenda** **Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Engage** • Warm Up **Explore** • Rehearse and Revise Script **Closing** • I Have a Voice
Performance One (Rehearsal Fourteen)	**Agenda** • Agenda & Check-in • Rehearse for Performance • Break • Performance One!
Performance Two (Rehearsal Fifteen)	**Agenda** • Agenda & Check-in • Rehearse for Performance • Group Phots • Break • Gather and Prepare • Performance Two!
Week Ten Reflection	
Rehearsal Sixteen **Word of the day:** Reflection **Goals:** • Reflect on our collective experience with our PJP	**Agenda** **Opening** • Agenda & Check-in **Explore** • Group Mural • Touchstones • Watch the Performance!

	Closing • Thank You Circle • I Have a Voice

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY POEM

CONFIDENCE

I believe promises will never be broken if people just keep them

I believe tomorrow is full of joy

I believe in myself

My hope for today will be a good day

My hope for today is to have confidence

My hope for today people who are mad will end up with laughter

My hope for tomorrow kids are safe

My hope for tomorrow the people who are hurting should hurt less

My hope for tomorrow will be a better day

People can recycle can change the world

People who are smart can change the world

People who are confident can change the world

Smart and intelligent people can change the world

I can perform justice by showing up

In the future I hope that I get my eagle feather.

LOVELY

I believe people with different races are being treated different

I believe I am unique

I believe every person alive or every person waiting yet to be born should have equal right

My hope for today is my voice to be heard about racial and gender justice

My hope for tomorrow is that I wake up and see that my voice was heard

Stopping all violence can change the world

My voice can change the world

In the future, **I hope that people won't be judged for their race.**

AV

I believe in equal opportunity for everyone regardless of race, religion, color, creed, gender, and sexual orientation

I believe in building each other up, not dragging people down for your own benefit

I believe that if you want love, the love has gotta come from you too

My hope for today is that you will comprehend what it's like to be a minority

I can perform justice by building people up to their potential

My future choices can change the world

NORTH BABY

I believe that I am strong and confident

My hope for today is people treating people equally

I can perform justice by being nice

Being seen and heard can change the world

In the future **I hope that 12 won't be so negative to African Americans and be fair and give the same time to whites and African Americans.**

CIANA

I believe in equal rights

My hope for today is for peace

I can perform justice by being against discrimination

My voice and my trials can change the world

ASENA

I believe in everything

My hope for today is that everyone can have peace

I can perform justice by being myself to change the world

I can change the world

LO

In the future **I hope that the world could be brave and actually dream.**

COOKIE

In the future **I hope that police don't discriminate against Black people and treat everyone the same.**

THE ENSEMBLE

In the future **I hope that my identity makes me feel celebrated in the world, not nervous walking through it.**

In the future I hope my traditions carry on.

In the future, **I hope that treaties are honored.**

In the future, I hope that everyone's voice is heard regardless of color.

In the future **I hope that most people respect other's gender that they wanna be.**

In the future **I hope more people like me will be listened to.**

In the future, **I hope that my people are taken care of.**

In the future, **I hope I keep asking questions louder and louder.**

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VITA

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